US012297029B2

(12) **United States Patent**
Sanger

(10) **Patent No.: US 12,297,029 B2**
(45) **Date of Patent: May 13, 2025**

(54) **DUNNAGE ARRANGEMENT INCLUDING CARGO POUCHES WITH STAGGERED SUPPORT MEMBERS**

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(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this patent is extended or adjusted under 35 U.S.C. 154(b) by 108 days.

(21) Appl. No.: **18/328,406**

(22) Filed: **Jun. 2, 2023**

(65) **Prior Publication Data**

US 2023/0391533 A1 Dec. 7, 2023

Related U.S. Application Data

(60) Provisional application No. 63/349,251, filed on Jun. 6, 2022.

(51) **Int. Cl.**
B65D 81/05 (2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**
CPC ***B65D 81/05*** (2013.01)

(58) **Field of Classification Search**
CPC B65D 19/44; B65D 19/02; B65D 90/12; B65D 2519/00532; B65D 2519/0082; B65D 2585/6882; B65D 25/005; B65D 88/12; B65D 81/05
USPC 206/216
See application file for complete search history.

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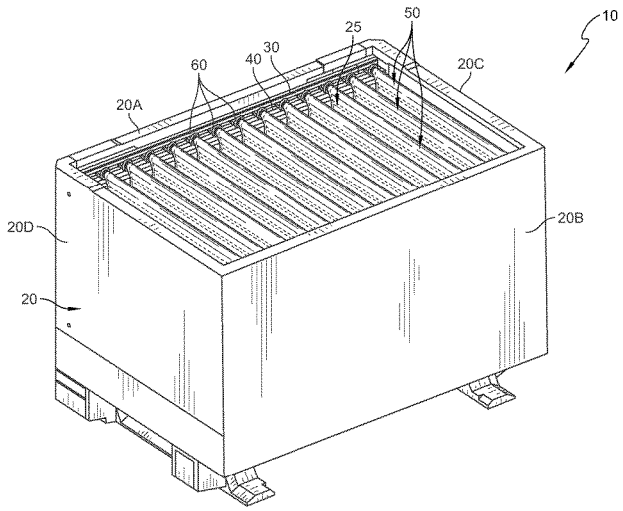
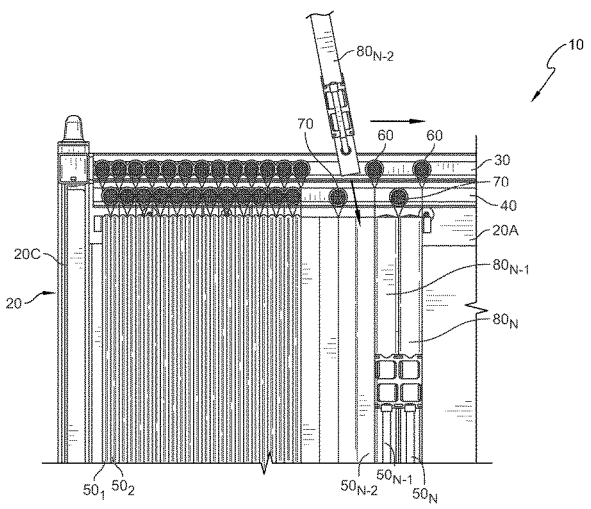
(57) **ABSTRACT**

A dunnage arrangement includes a container having spaced-apart sidewalls extending upwardly from the container floor, first and second pairs of guide rails each mounted to and extending at least partially along the length respective sidewalls such that the second pair of guide rails are positioned between the floor and the first pair of guide rails, a plurality of pouches each having first and second opposed sidewalls defining a pocket therebetween configured to support cargo within the container, and support members coupled to or near terminal tops of each of the first and second sidewalls of the pouches. The pouches are received side-by-side within the container with the support members coupled to the first sidewalls supported on and movable along the first pair of guide rails and with the support members coupled to the second sidewalls supported on and movable along the second pair of guide rails.

20 Claims, 8 Drawing Sheets





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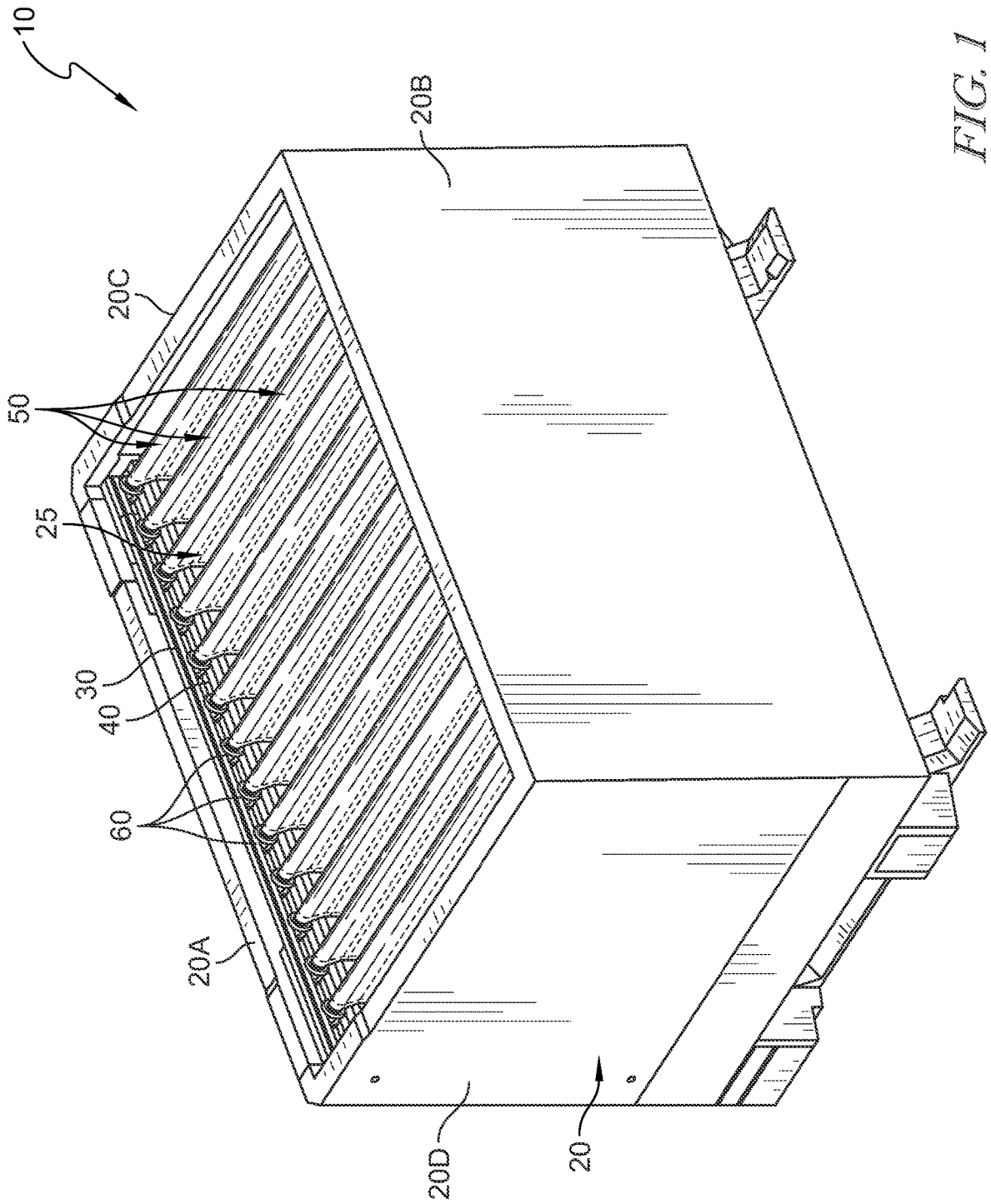

FIG. 1

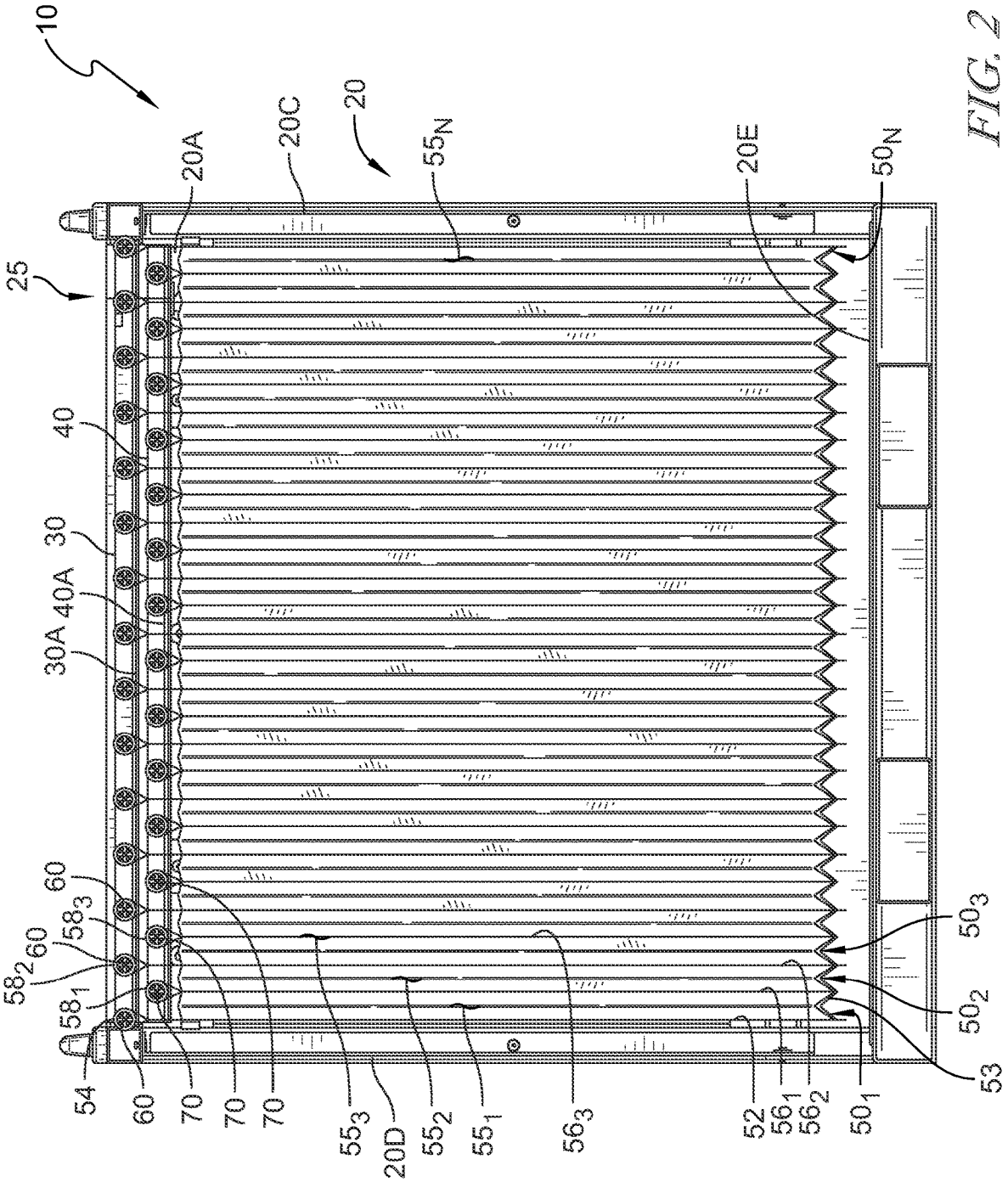
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FIG. 2

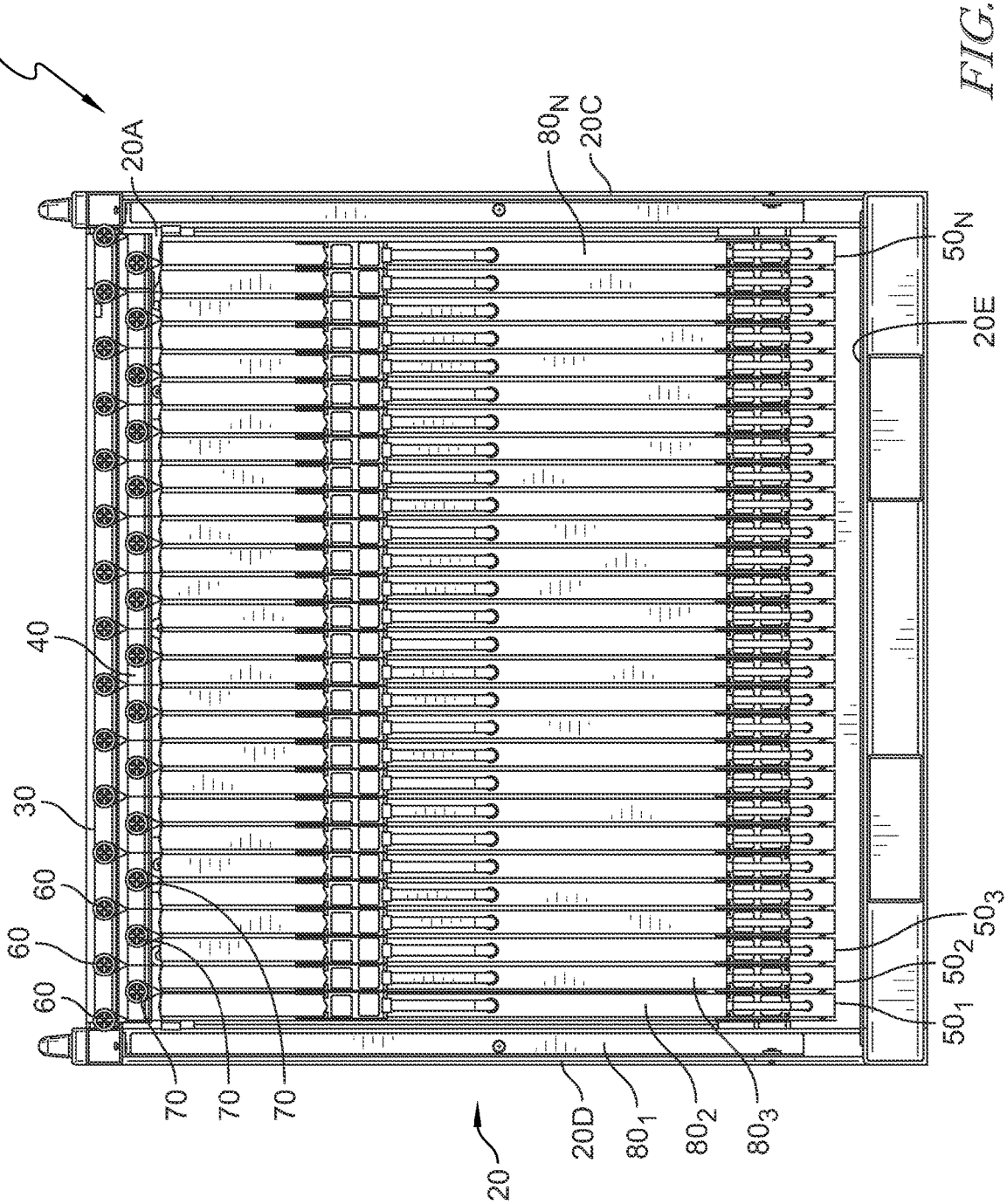
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FIG. 3

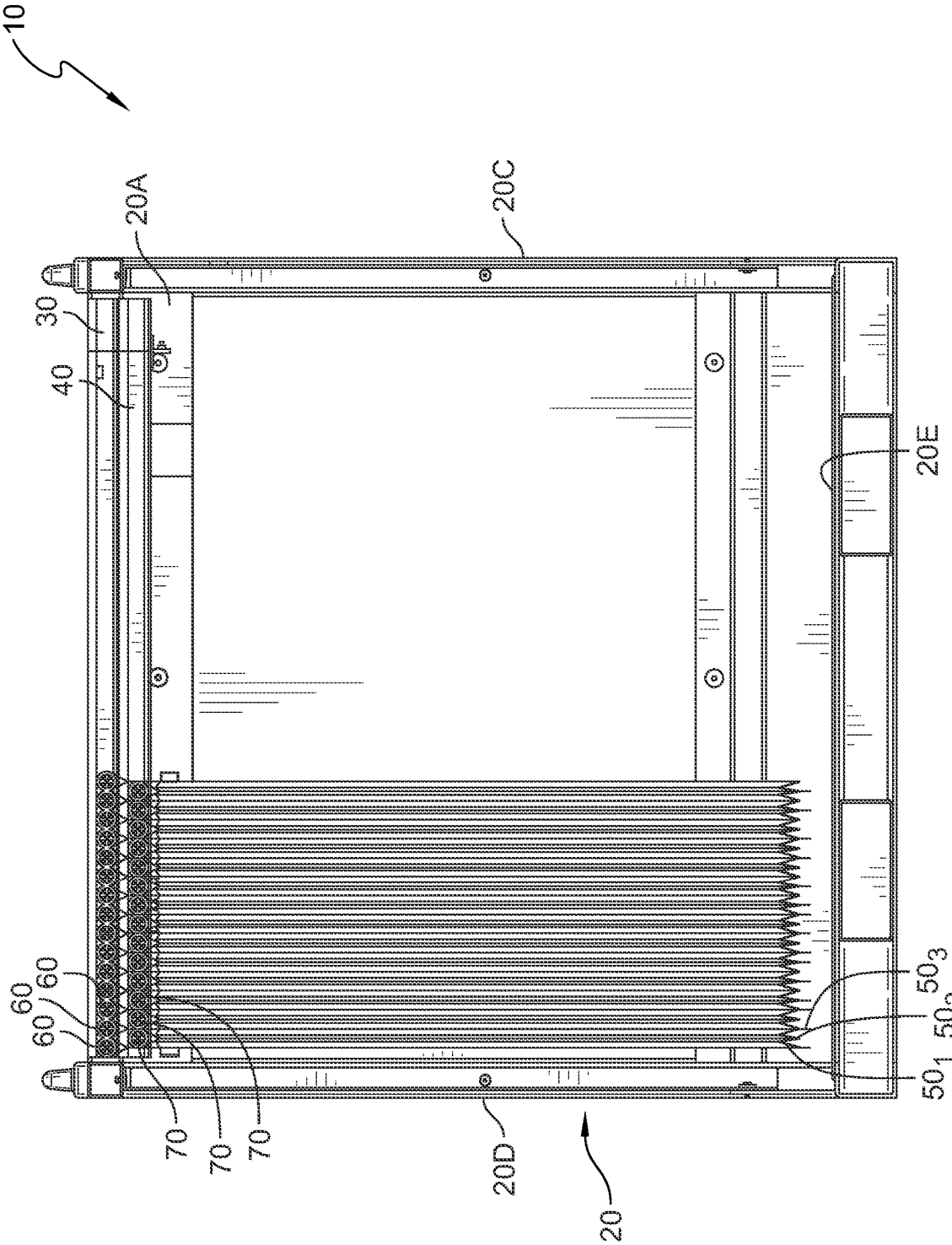

FIG. 4A

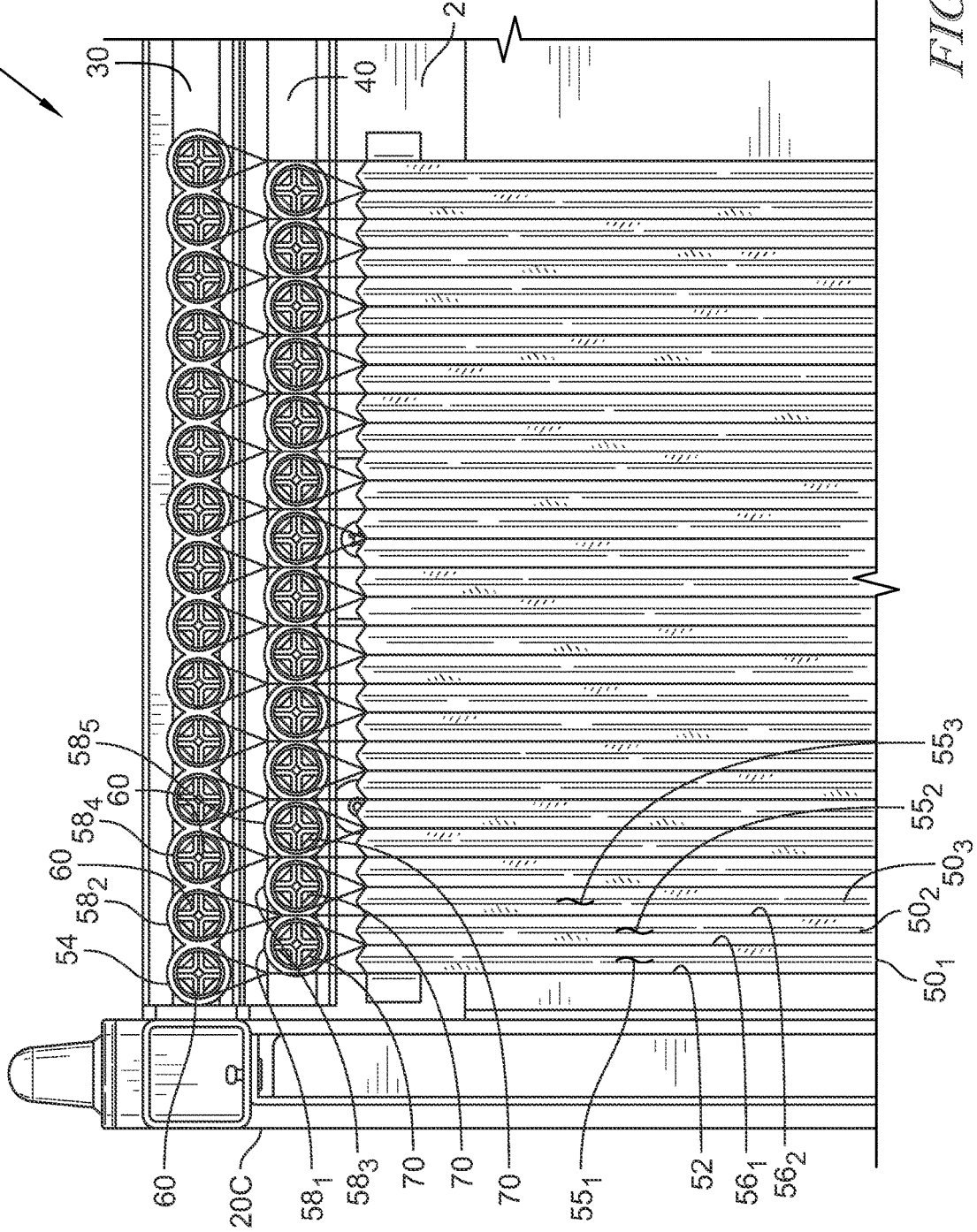
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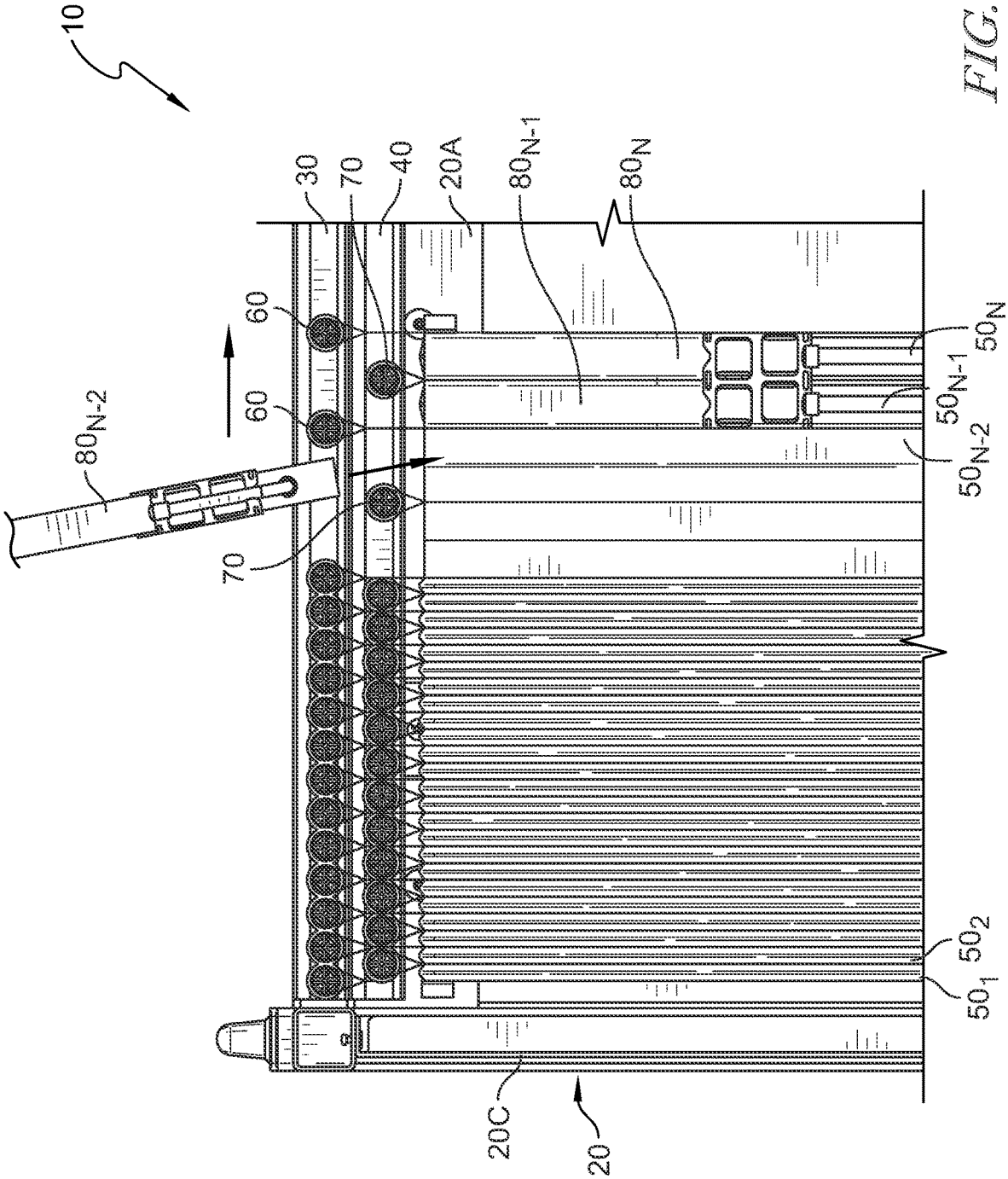
FIG. 4B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20C
20

FIG. 5

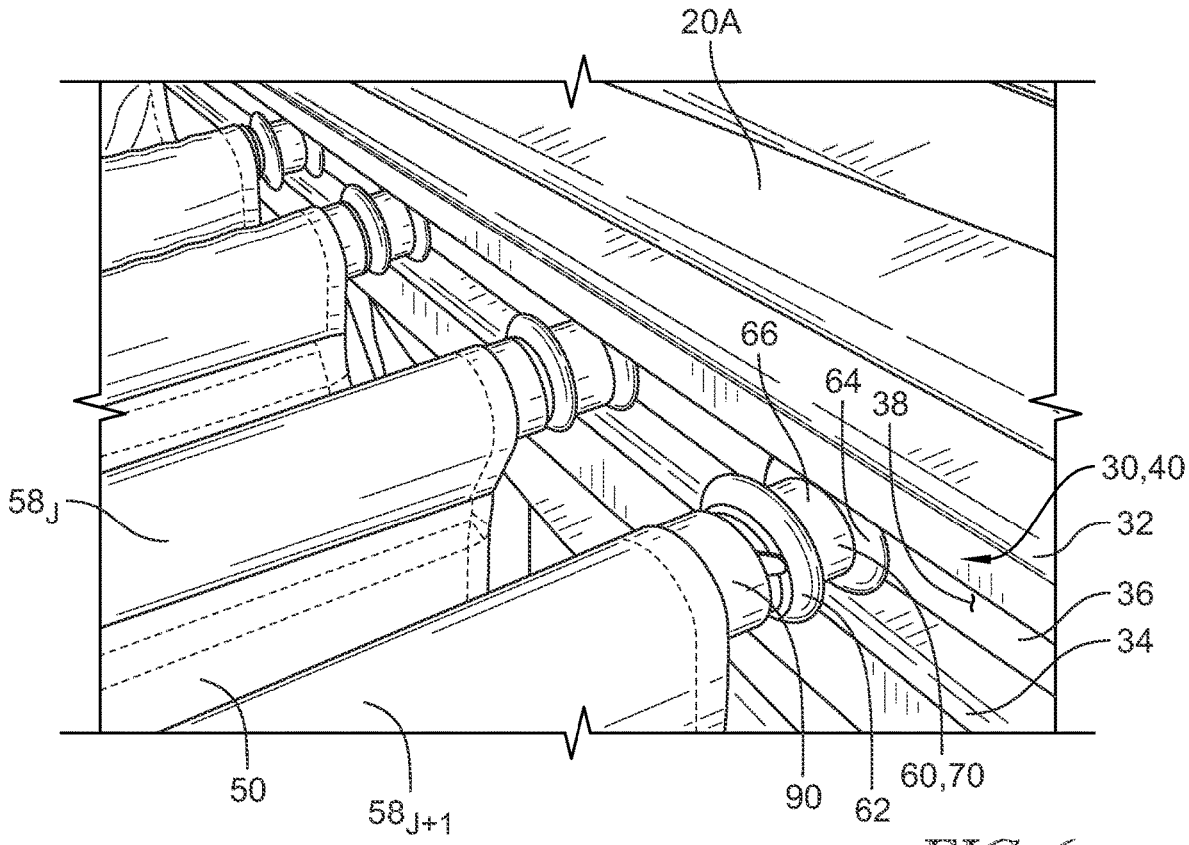

FIG. 6

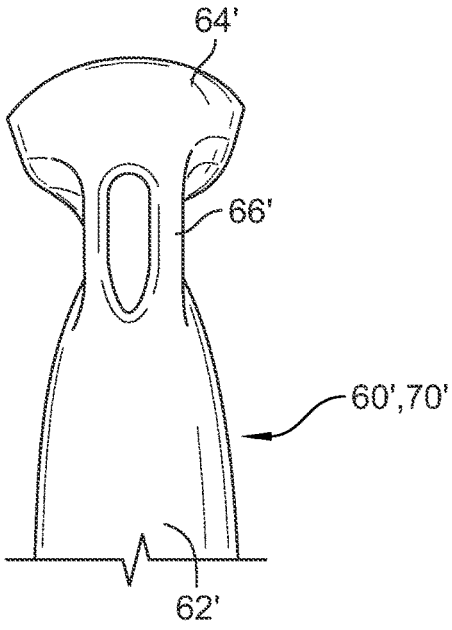

FIG. 7

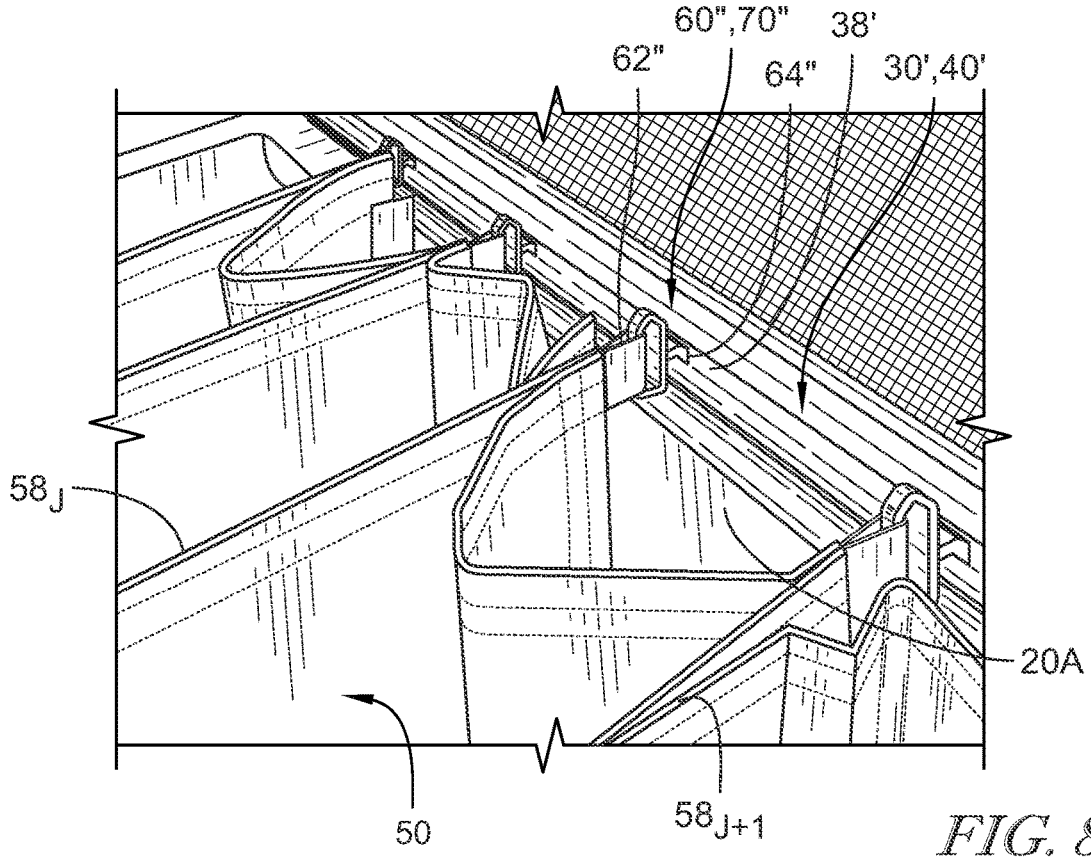

FIG. 8

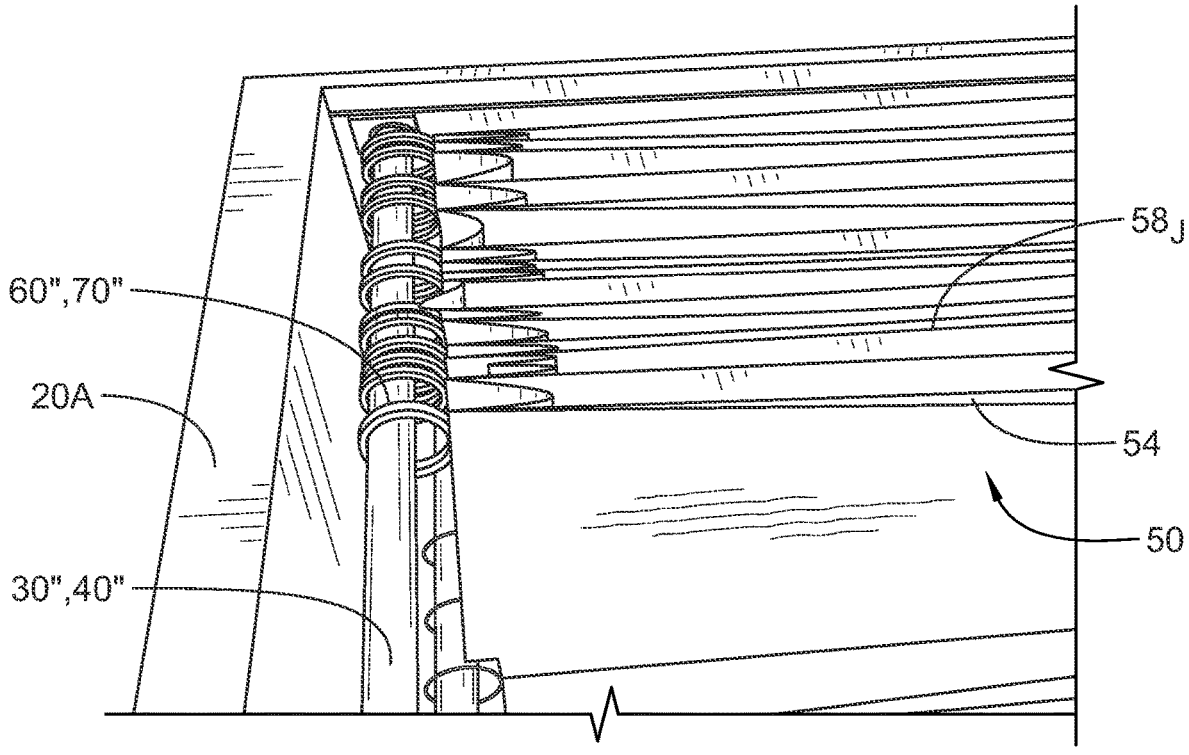

FIG. 9

DUNNAGE ARRANGEMENT INCLUDING CARGO POUCHES WITH STAGGERED SUPPORT MEMBERS

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

This patent application claims the benefit of, and priority to, U.S. Provisional Patent Application Ser. No. 63/349,251, filed Jun. 6, 2022, the disclosure of which is expressly incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates generally to shipping and/or storage containers, and more specifically to such containers with movable pouches for supporting cargo therein.

BACKGROUND

Storage and/or shipping containers for storing and/or shipping cargo, e.g., in the form of multiple different products and/or multiple units of identical products, are typically available in various sizes and configurations. Dunnage for some such containers may take the form of multiple pouches movable relative to the container to load cargo therein and to remove cargo therefrom.

SUMMARY

The present invention may comprise one or more of the features recited in the attached claims, and/or one or more of the following features and combinations thereof. In a first aspect, a dunnage arrangement may comprise a container having spaced-apart sidewalls each defining a length and each extending upwardly from opposite respective sides of a floor of the container, a first pair of guide rails each mounted to and extending at least partially along the length of a respective one of the spaced-apart sidewalls of the container, a second pair of guide rails each mounted to and extending at least partially along the length of a respective one of the spaced-apart sidewalls such that the second pair of guide rails are positioned between the floor and the first pair of guide rails, a plurality of pouches each having first and second opposed sidewalls extending upwardly from a bottom wall or fold to define a pocket therebetween configured to support cargo within the container, and support members coupled to or near terminal tops of each of the first and second sidewalls of the plurality of pouches, wherein the pouches are received side-by-side within the container with the support members coupled to the first sidewalls supported on and movable along the first pair of guide rails and with the support members coupled to the second sidewalls supported on and movable along the second pair of guide rails.

A second aspect may include the features of the first aspect, and wherein the first pair of guide rails are aligned and parallel with one another with both of the first pair of guide rails disposed a first distance above the floor of the container, and wherein the second pair of guide rails are aligned and parallel with one another with both of the second pair of guide rails disposed a second distance above the floor of the container, the second distance less than the first distance by at least a thickness of the support members.

A third aspect may include the features of the second aspect, and wherein each of the first pair of guide rails and each of the second pair or guide rails comprises an elongated hollow member defining a channel extending at least partially along the length of a respective one of the spaced-apart sidewalls of the container, and wherein the support members each comprise at least one rod coupled to or near a terminal top of a respective one of the first and second sidewalls of the plurality of pouches and extending between the spaced-apart sidewalls of the container, and rollers attached to opposite ends of the at least one rod, the rollers disposed within and configured to roll or glide along the channels of a respective one of the first or second pair of guide rails.

A fourth aspect may include the features of the second aspect, and wherein each of the first pair of guide rails and each of the second pair or guide rails comprises an elongated hollow member defining a channel extending at least partially along the length of a respective one of the spaced-apart sidewalls of the container, and wherein the support members each comprise a pair of rollers attached to respective opposite sides a respective one of the first and second sidewalls of the plurality of pouches at or near a terminal top thereof, the rollers disposed within and configured to roll or glide along the channels of a respective one of the first or second pair of guide rails.

A fifth aspect may include the features of the second aspect, and wherein each of the first pair of guide rails and each of the second pair or guide rails comprises an elongated hollow member defining a channel extending at least partially along the length of a respective one of the spaced-apart sidewalls of the container, and wherein the support members each comprise at least one rod coupled to or near a terminal top of a respective one of the first and second sidewalls of the plurality of pouches and extending between the spaced-apart sidewalls of the container, the at least one rod having flared opposite ends disposed within and configured to glide along the channels of a respective one of the first or second pair of guide rails.

A sixth aspect may include the features of the second aspect, and wherein each of the first pair of guide rails and each of the second pair or guide rails comprises an elongated bracket defining a channel extending at least partially along the length of a respective one of the spaced-apart sidewalls of the container, and wherein the support members each comprise a pair of clips attached to respective opposite sides a respective one of the first and second sidewalls of the plurality of pouches at or near a terminal top thereof, each of the clips including an engagement member engaging the channels such that the clips slide or glide along the channels of a respective one of the first or second pair of guide rails.

A seventh aspect may include the features of the second aspect, and wherein each of the first pair of guide rails and each of the second pair or guide rails comprises an elongated tube extending at least partially along the length of a respective one of the spaced-apart sidewalls of the container, and wherein the support members each comprise a pair of rings attached to respective opposite sides a respective one of the first and second sidewalls of the plurality of pouches at or near a terminal top thereof, each of the rings received on a respective one of the first or second pair of guide rails such that the rings slide or glide along a respective pair of tubes.

An eighth aspect may include the features of the second aspect, and wherein the support members comprise a plurality of first support members each coupled to or near a terminal top of the first sidewall of a respective one of the plurality of pouches, and a plurality of second support members each coupled to or near a terminal top of the second sidewall of a respective one of the plurality of pouches.

A ninth aspect may include the features of the eighth aspect, and wherein each of the plurality of pouches has a folded configuration in which the first and second sidewalls of the pouch are adjacent to one another, the first support member is supported on the first pair of guide rails and the second support member is supported on the second pair of guide rails and positioned at least partially under the first support member, and wherein each of the plurality of pouches has an expanded configuration in which the support members of the respective first and second sidewalls are spaced apart from one another along the respective first and second pair of guide rails to allow cargo to be received in and withdrawn from the pocket.

In a tenth aspect, a dunnage arrangement may comprise a container having spaced-apart sidewalls each defining a length and each extending upwardly from opposite respective sides of a floor of the container, a first pair of guide rails each mounted to and extending at least partially along the length of a respective one of the spaced-apart sidewalls of the container, a second pair of guide rails each mounted to and extending at least partially along the length of a respective one of the spaced-apart sidewalls such that the second pair of guide rails are positioned between the floor and the first pair of guide rails, a plurality of pouches configured to be received side-by-side within the container, each having first and second opposed sidewalls extending upwardly from a bottom wall or fold to define a pocket therebetween configured to support cargo within the container, a plurality of first support members each coupled to or near a terminal top of the first sidewall of a respective one of the plurality of pouches, and a plurality of second support members each coupled to or near a terminal top of the second sidewall of a respective one of the plurality of pouches, wherein each of the plurality of pouches has a folded configuration in which the first and second sidewalls of the pouch are adjacent to one another, the first support member is supported on the first pair of guide rails and the second support member is supported on the second pair of guide rails and positioned at least partially under the first support member, and wherein each of the plurality of pouches has an expanded configuration in which the support members of the respective first and second sidewalls are spaced apart from one another along the respective first and second pair of guide rails to allow cargo to be received in and withdrawn from the pocket.

An eleventh aspect may include the features of the tenth aspect, and wherein the first pair of guide rails are aligned and parallel with one another with both of the first pair of guide rails disposed a first distance above the floor of the container, and wherein the second pair of guide rails are aligned and parallel with one another with both of the second pair of guide rails disposed a second distance above the floor of the container, the second distance less than the first distance by at least a thickness of the support members.

A twelfth aspect may include the features of the eleventh aspect, and wherein each of the first pair of guide rails and each of the second pair or guide rails comprises an elongated hollow member defining a channel extending at least partially along the length of a respective one of the spaced-apart sidewalls of the container, and wherein the plurality of first support members and the plurality of second support members each comprise at least one rod coupled to or near a terminal top of a respective one of the first and second sidewalls of the plurality of pouches and extending between the spaced-apart sidewalls of the container, and rollers attached to opposite ends of the at least one rod, the rollers disposed within and configured to roll or glide along the channels of a respective one of the first or second pair of guide rails.

A thirteenth aspect may include the features of the eleventh aspect, wherein each of the first pair of guide rails and each of the second pair or guide rails comprises an elongated hollow member defining a channel extending at least partially along the length of a respective one of the spaced-apart sidewalls of the container, and wherein the plurality of first support members and the plurality of second support members each comprise a pair of rollers attached to respective opposite sides a respective one of the first and second sidewalls of the plurality of pouches at or near a terminal top thereof, the rollers disposed within and configured to roll or glide along the channels of a respective one of the first or second pair of guide rails.

A fourteenth aspect may include the features of the eleventh aspect, and wherein each of the first pair of guide rails and each of the second pair or guide rails comprises an elongated hollow member defining a channel extending at least partially along the length of a respective one of the spaced-apart sidewalls of the container, and wherein the plurality of first support members and the plurality of second support members each comprise at least one rod coupled to or near a terminal top of a respective one of the first and second sidewalls of the plurality of pouches and extending between the spaced-apart sidewalls of the container, the at least one rod having flared opposite ends disposed within and configured to glide along the channels of a respective one of the first or second pair of guide rails.

A fifteenth aspect may include the features of the eleventh aspect, and wherein each of the first pair of guide rails and each of the second pair or guide rails comprises an elongated bracket defining a channel extending at least partially along the length of a respective one of the spaced-apart sidewalls of the container, and wherein the plurality of first support members and the plurality of second support members each comprise a pair of clips attached to respective opposite sides a respective one of the first and second sidewalls of the plurality of pouches at or near a terminal top thereof, each of the clips including an engagement member engaging the channels such that the clips slide or glide along the channels of a respective one of the first or second pair of guide rails.

A sixteenth aspect may include the features of the eleventh aspect, and wherein each of the first pair of guide rails and each of the second pair or guide rails comprises an elongated tube extending at least partially along the length of a respective one of the spaced-apart sidewalls of the container, and wherein the plurality of first support members and the plurality of second support members each comprise a pair of rings attached to respective opposite sides a respective one of the first and second sidewalls of the plurality of pouches at or near a terminal top thereof, each of the rings received on a respective one of the first or second pair of guide rails such that the rings slide or glide along a respective pair of tubes.

In a seventeenth aspect, a dunnage arrangement may comprise a container having spaced-apart sidewalls each defining a length and each extending upwardly from opposite respective sides of a floor of the container, a first pair of guide rails each mounted to and extending at least partially along the length of a respective one of the spaced-apart sidewalls of the container, a second pair of guide rails each mounted to and extending at least partially along the length of a respective one of the spaced-apart sidewalls such that the second pair of guide rails are positioned between the floor and the first pair of guide rails, a plurality of pouches

configured to be received side-by-side within the container, each having first and second opposed sidewalls extending upwardly from a bottom wall or fold to define a pocket therebetween for supporting cargo within the container, and support members, coupled to the plurality of pouches, supported on and movable along each of the first and second pairs of guide rails, wherein the first sidewall of each of the plurality of pouches defines a first length between the bottom wall or fold and a respective one of the support members coupled thereto and supported on the first pair of guide rails, and wherein the second sidewall of each of the plurality of pouches defines a second length between the bottom wall or fold and a respective one of the support members coupled thereto and supported on the second pair of guide rails, the second length less than the first length.

An eighteenth aspect may include the features of the seventeenth aspect, and wherein the first pair of guide rails are aligned and parallel with one another with both of the first pair of guide rails disposed a first distance above the floor of the container, and wherein the second pair of guide rails are aligned and parallel with one another with both of the second pair of guide rails disposed a second distance above the floor of the container, the second distance and the second length less than the first distance and the first length respectively by at least a thickness of the support members.

A nineteenth aspect may include the features of the eighteenth aspect, and wherein the support members may comprise a plurality of first support members each coupled to or near a terminal top of the first sidewall of a respective one of the plurality of pouches, and a plurality of second support members each coupled to or near a terminal top of the second sidewall of a respective one of the plurality of pouches.

A twentieth aspect may include the features of the nineteenth aspect, and wherein each of the plurality of pouches has a folded configuration in which the first and second sidewalls of the pouch are adjacent to one another, the first support member is supported on the first pair of guide rails and the second support member is supported on the second pair of guide rails and positioned at least partially under the first support member, and wherein each of the plurality of pouches has an expanded configuration in which the support members of the respective first and second sidewalls are spaced apart from one another along the respective first and second pair of guide rails to allow cargo to be received in and withdrawn from the pocket.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

This disclosure is illustrated by way of example and not by way of limitation in the accompanying Figures. Where considered appropriate, reference labels have been repeated among the Figures to indicate corresponding or analogous elements.

FIG. **1** is a side perspective view of an embodiment of a dunnage arrangement including a container with multiple movable cargo pouches having staggered support members.

FIG. **2** is a side elevation view of the dunnage arrangement of claim **1** with one side of the container removed to illustrate mounting and support of the cargo pouches within the container.

FIG. **3** is a side elevation view similar to FIG. **2** and illustrating a cargo product received in and supported by each of the multiple pouches.

FIG. **4**A is a side perspective view similar to FIGS. **2** and **3** and illustrating empty cargo pouches all moved to a compact configuration adjacent to one end wall of the container.

FIG. **4**B is a magnified view of a portion of the view depicted in FIG. **4**A and illustrating compact positioning of the cargo pouch support members in the compact configuration of the empty cargo pouches illustrated in FIG. **4**A.

FIG. **5** is a side perspective view similar to FIG. **4**B illustrating sequential loading of cargo products into the empty cargo pouches illustrated in FIG. **4**B.

FIG. **6** is a magnified perspective view of an embodiment of the cargo pouches, support members, and cargo pouch support rails mounted to the container.

FIG. **7** is a magnified view of an alternate embodiment of a cargo pouch support member.

FIG. **8** is a magnified perspective view of another alternate embodiment of the cargo pouches, support members, and cargo pouch support rails mounted to the container.

FIG. **9** is a magnified perspective view of yet another alternate embodiment of the cargo pouches, support members, and cargo pouch support rails mounted to the container.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

While the concepts of the present disclosure are susceptible to various modifications and alternative forms, specific exemplary embodiments thereof have been shown by way of example in the drawing and will herein be described in detail. It should be understood, however, that there is no intent to limit the concepts of the present disclosure to the particular forms disclosed, but on the contrary, the intention is to cover all modifications, equivalents, and alternatives consistent with the present disclosure and the appended claims.

References in the specification to "one embodiment", "an embodiment", "an example embodiment", etc., indicate that the embodiment described may include a particular feature, structure, or characteristic, but every embodiment may not necessarily include the particular feature, structure, or characteristic. Moreover, such phrases may or may not necessarily refer to the same embodiment. Further, when a particular feature, structure, or characteristic is described in connection with an embodiment, it is submitted that it is within the knowledge of one skilled in the art to effect such feature, structure, or characteristic in connection with other embodiments whether or not explicitly described. Further still, it is contemplated that any single feature, structure, or characteristic disclosed herein may be combined with any one or more other disclosed feature, structure, or characteristic, whether or not explicitly described, and that no limitations on the types and/or number of such combinations should therefore be inferred.

This disclosure relates to a dunnage arrangement including a container fitted with upper and lower sets of support rails configured to support pouch support members of multiple, side-by-side cargo pouches movable along the support rails, wherein the cargo pouches are sized to each receive and support a cargo product therein, and wherein the pouches, support members and support rails are configured to provide for a compact configuration of empty ones of the cargo pouches in which the sides of the pouches are alternatingly mounted, via the pouch support members, to the upper and lower support rails so as to be successively staggered between the upper and lower support rails.

Referring now to FIGS. **1**-**5**, an embodiment is shown of a dunnage arrangement **10** including a container **20** and

cargo-supporting dunnage **25** mounted therein, wherein the cargo-supporting dunnage **25** is illustratively provided in the form of multiple cargo pouches **50** arranged side-by-side within the container **20**. The container may be conventional, and illustratively includes opposed, spaced-apart sidewalls **20**B each extending upwardly away from opposite sides of a floor **20**E of the container **20** between opposed end walls **20**C, **20**D also extending upwardly and away from the floor **20**E. Each of the sidewalls **20**A, **20**B illustratively defines a length between the end walls **20**C, **20**D. In the illustrated embodiment, the sidewalls **20**A, **20**B terminate at co-planar top surfaces, although in alternate embodiments the terminal top surface of the sidewall **20**A may not be co-planar with the terminal top surface of the sidewall **20**B. In some embodiments, the top surfaces of the end walls **20**C, **20**D may terminate at the terminal top surfaces of the sidewall(s) **20**A and/or **20**B as illustrated by example in FIG. **1**. In alternate embodiments, one or both of the end walls **20**C, **20**D may terminate somewhere between the floor **20**E and the terminal top surface(s) of the sidewall(s) **20**A and/or **20**B. In still other alternate embodiments, one or both of the end walls **20**C, **20**D may be hinged or otherwise configured to fold or drop to provide for an opening in the respective end(s) of the container **20** which has a terminal top surface positioned between the terminal top surface(s) of the sidewall(s) **20**A, **20**B and the floor of the container **20**.

Upper and lower pairs of elongated support rails **30**, **40** are illustratively mounted to the sidewalls **20**A, **20**B of the container **20** with one each of the support rails **40** mounted to one sidewall **20**A and with one each of the support rails **30**, **40** also mounted to the other sidewall **20**B. One such set of support rails **30**, **40** is illustrated in FIGS. **1-5** as being mounted to the sidewall **20**A of the container **20**, and it will be understood that another set of support rails **30**, **40** are likewise mounted to the opposed sidewall **20**B. The upper elongated support rail **30** is illustratively mounted, in a conventional manner, at or adjacent to the terminal top surface of the sidewall **20**A, and illustratively extends along the length of the sidewall **20**A. The support rail **30** is illustratively provided in the form of a single, unitary support rail, although in alternate embodiments, the support rail **30** may be made up of two or more sections mounted end-to-end. In the illustrated embodiment, the support rail **30** is mounted so as to form a support surface **30**A that is parallel with a plane formed by the upwardly-facing surface of the floor **20**E of the container **20** or that is parallel with a plane formed by a surface upon which the container **20** rests, and such that the pair of support rails **30** are aligned and parallel with one another. In alternate embodiments, the support rail **30** may be mounted such that the support surface **30**A is non-parallel with the plane formed by the floor **20**E of the container **20** and/or non-parallel with the surface upon which the container **20** rests.

The lower elongated support rail **40** is illustratively mounted, also in a conventional manner, below the support rail **30** such that the support rail **40** positioned between the floor **20**E of the container **20** and the support rail **30**, and illustratively extends along the length of the sidewall **20**A. In the illustrated embodiment, the support rail **40** is mounted to the sidewall **20**A such that a top surface of the support rail **40** is in contact with the a bottom surface of the support rail **30**, although in alternate embodiments the support rails may be spaced apart from one other along the sidewall **20**A. The support rail **40** is illustratively provided in the form of a single, unitary support rail, although in alternate embodiments, the support rail **40** may be made up of two or more sections mounted end-to-end. In the illustrated embodiment, the support rail **40** is mounted so as to form a support surface **40**A that is parallel with the plane formed by the upwardly-facing surface of the floor **20**E of the container **20** or that is parallel with a plane formed by a surface upon which the container **20** rests, and such that the pair of support rails **40** are aligned and parallel with one another. In alternate embodiments, the support rail **40** may be mounted such that the support surface **40**A is non-parallel with the plane formed by the floor **20**E of the container **20** and/or non-parallel with the surface upon which the container **20** rests. In any case, the support rail **40** is illustratively mounted such that the elongated support surface **40**A of the support rail **40** is parallel with the elongated support surface **30**A of the support rail **30**. The pair of support rails **30** are illustratively mounted so as to be disposed a first distance above the floor **20**E, and the pair of support rails **40** are illustratively mounted so as to be disposed a second distance above the floor, wherein the second distance is less than the first distance. In some embodiments, as described in greater detail below, the second distance is less than the first distance by at least the thickness of the support members supporting the cargo pouches **50** on the support rails **30**, **40**.

The multiple cargo pouches **50** are arranged side-by-side within the container **20** between the end walls **20**C, **20**D, and each pouch **50** is supported at opposite terminal sides thereof on and by the support rails **30**, **40** mounted to each sidewall **20**A, **20**B of the container **20**. Each cargo pouch **50** is illustratively provided in the form of a folded pouch having opposed sidewalls each extending upwardly from a bottom end or fold to define a pocket therebetween that is sized and configured to support a cargo product within the container **20**. In the illustrated embodiment, the cargo pouches **50** are interconnected with each other such that each pouch **50** shares at least one sidewall with an adjacent pouch or pouches **50**. For example, starting with the cargo pouch $\mathbf{50}_1$ positioned next to the end wall **20**D in FIG. **2**, one sidewall **52** extends upwardly from the bottom wall or fold **53** to a terminal top **54**, and the other sidewall $\mathbf{56}_1$ extends upwardly from the bottom end or fold **53** to another terminal top $\mathbf{58}_1$. The sidewall $\mathbf{56}_1$ also forms one sidewall to the next successive pouch $\mathbf{50}_2$ which has another sidewall $\mathbf{56}_2$ extending upwardly from the fold of the pouch $\mathbf{50}_2$ to a terminal top $\mathbf{58}_2$, and the sidewall $\mathbf{56}_2$ also forms one sidewall to the next successive pouch $\mathbf{50}_3$ which has another sidewall $\mathbf{56}_3$ extending upwardly from the fold of the pouch $\mathbf{50}_3$ to a terminal top $\mathbf{58}_3$, etc. The container **20** illustratively includes N such pouches **50** arranged side-by-side, where N may be any positive integer which will depend on the dimensions of the container **20**, so as to form a single tier of cargo pouches **50** supported by the opposed pairs of support rails **30**, **40** within the container **20**.

The sidewalls of the cargo pouches **50** illustratively alternate in length such that one sidewall, e.g., **52**, $\mathbf{56}_2$ and all even-numbered subscripts of **56**, of each pouch $\mathbf{50}_1$-$\mathbf{50}_N$ is supported at or adjacent to the terminal top thereof, e.g., **54**, $\mathbf{58}_2$ and all even-numbered subscripts of **58**, by a respective support member **60** on and movable along the support rail **30**. The other sidewall, e.g. $\mathbf{56}_1$, $\mathbf{56}_3$ and all odd-numbered subscripts of **56**, of each pouch $\mathbf{50}_1$-$\mathbf{50}_N$ is supported at or adjacent to the terminal top thereof, e.g., $\mathbf{58}_1$, $\mathbf{58}_3$ and all odd-numbered subscripts of **58**), by a respective support member **70** on and movable along the lower support rail **40**. The cargo pouches $\mathbf{50}_1$-$\mathbf{50}_N$ each form a corresponding cargo pocket $\mathbf{55}_1$-$\mathbf{55}_N$ between the respective sidewalls thereof and bottom end or fold **53**. In alternate embodiments, one or more of the pouches $\mathbf{50}_1$-$\mathbf{50}_N$ may be separate from others of the pouches $\mathbf{50}_1$-$\mathbf{50}_N$. In any case, one of the

sidewalls of each pouch **50** has a first length between the bottom end or fold **53** and the respective support member **60** and is movably coupled to the upper set of support rails **30**, and the other sidewall of the pouch **50** has a second length between the bottom end or fold **53** and the respective support member **70**, and is movably coupled to the lower set of support rails **40**, wherein the second length is less than the first length.

The cargo pouches $\mathbf{50}_1$-$\mathbf{50}_N$ and the cargo pockets $\mathbf{55}_1$-$\mathbf{55}_N$ formed therein are illustratively sized to receive a respective cargo product $\mathbf{80}_1$-$\mathbf{80}_N$ therein as illustrated by example in FIG. **3**. In some embodiments, the cargo products $\mathbf{80}_1$-$\mathbf{80}_N$ are identical to one another, although in other embodiments one or more of the cargo products $\mathbf{80}_1$-$\mathbf{80}_N$ may be different from others of the cargo products $\mathbf{80}_1$-$\mathbf{80}_N$. In any case, the dimensions of the cargo products $\mathbf{80}_1$-$\mathbf{80}_N$ may vary by application, and generally the dimensions of the cargo pouches $\mathbf{50}_1$-$\mathbf{50}_N$, the cargo pockets $\mathbf{55}_1$-$\mathbf{55}_N$ and the container **20**, as well as the number of cargo pouches $\mathbf{50}_1$-$\mathbf{50}_N$ that can be fit into the container **20**, may likewise vary by application.

With cargo products $\mathbf{80}_1$-$\mathbf{80}_N$ received within the cargo pouches $\mathbf{50}_1$-$\mathbf{50}_N$ as illustrated by example in FIG. **3**, the support members **60** are spaced laterally apart from one another on and along the support rail **30**, and the support members **70** are likewise spaced laterally apart from one other on and along the support rail **40**. The support rails **30**, **40** and the support members **60**, **70** are illustratively configured such that the support members **60**, **70** are moveable along and relative to the respective support rails **30**, **40** while being suspended therefrom. In some embodiments, the support rails **30**, **40** and the support members **60**, **70** are configured such that the support members **60** and/or the support members **70** slide along and relative to the respective support rails **30**, **40**, although in other embodiments the support rails **30**, **40** and the support members **60**, **70** may be configured such that the support members **60** and/or the support members **70** roll along and relative to the respective support rails **30**, Some non-limiting examples of the support rails **30**, **40**, the support members **60**, **70** and the cargo pouches **50**, are illustrated in FIGS. **6-9** and described below.

With all of the cargo pouches $\mathbf{50}_1$-$\mathbf{50}_N$ empty, the support members **60** can all be drawn together along the support rail **30** into sequential contact with one another, and the support members **70** can likewise all be drawn together along the support rail **40** into sequential contact with one another, to arrange each of the cargo pouches $\mathbf{50}_1$-$\mathbf{50}_N$ in a compact, folded configuration in which the sidewalls of each pouch $\mathbf{50}_1$-$\mathbf{50}_N$ are adjacent to one another as illustrated by example in FIGS. **4**A and **4**B. As best illustrated in FIG. **4**B, with the support members **60**, **70** illustratively identical to one another, each support member **70** is positioned on the support rail **40** below, e.g., centrally below, two adjacent support members **60** positioned on the support rail e.g., such that the support members **60**, **70** sequentially interdigitate with one another along the respective support rails **30**, **40** such that the support members **60** on the support rail **30** lie staggered or offset relative to the support members **70** on the support rail **40** and vice versa, and such that the support member **70** for each pouch $\mathbf{50}_1$-$\mathbf{50}_N$ is positioned at least partially under the support member **60** for the same pouch $\mathbf{50}_1$-$\mathbf{50}_N$. The lengths of the opposed sides of each pouch $\mathbf{50}_1$-$\mathbf{50}_N$, as well as the distances between the respective support rails **30** and **40** and the floor **20**E of the container **20**, thus illustratively differ by at least the thickness of the support members **70** so as to accommodate such staggering of the support members **60**, **70** as illustrated by example in FIGS. **4**A, **4**B and **5**. Each cargo pouch $\mathbf{50}_1$-$\mathbf{50}_N$ also has an expanded configuration in which the support members **60**, **70** are spaced apart from one another along the respective support rails **30**, **40** so as to allow cargo products $\mathbf{80}_1$-$\mathbf{80}_N$ to be received in and withdrawn from the pockets **55** of respective ones of the pouches $\mathbf{50}_1$-$\mathbf{50}_N$ as illustrated by example in FIGS. **3** and **5**.

This arrangement of the support rails **30**, **40** and respective support members **60**, **70** thus provides for a space savings along the length of the container **20** (i.e., along the sidewalls **20**A, **20**B) of empty ones cargo pouches $\mathbf{50}_1$-$\mathbf{50}_N$ gathered together in the compact configuration illustrated by example in FIGS. **4**A-**5** of approximately 50% as compared with conventional cargo pouch arrangements in which the cargo pouch support members are all supported on and moveable along a single set of opposed support rails. This advantageously increases the number of cargo products $\mathbf{80}_1$-$\mathbf{80}_N$ in a container **20** that are accessible to a worker positioned at one end of the container **20**, e.g., adjacent to the end wall **20**C, by providing for a more compact gathering of empty ones of the cargo pouches $\mathbf{50}_1$-$\mathbf{50}_N$ at and adjacent to that end of the container, as best illustrated by example in FIG. **5**. This, in turn, allows the worker positioned at one end of the container **20** to load and/or unload more of the cargo products $\mathbf{80}_1$-$\mathbf{80}_N$ into/from the cargo pouches $\mathbf{50}_1$-$\mathbf{50}_N$ as compared with conventional cargo pouch arrangements, due to the reduced length space that is taken up in the container **20** by the empty cargo pouches gathered at the respective end of the container **20**. In other words, because the empty cargo pouches **50** collected at the respective end of the container **20** take up less length along the sidewalls **20**A, **20**B of the container **20** than the same number of cargo pouches in conventional cargo pouch arrangements, more cargo-bearing pouches $\mathbf{50}_1$-$\mathbf{50}_N$ will be reachable by the worker positioned at one end **20**C, **20**D of the container **20** than in conventional cargo pouch arrangements. In some embodiments, this may illustratively provide for an increased number of cargo pouches and cargo products per container **20**, which may, in turn, reduce the total number of containers **20** required to transport/store the same number of cargo products as compared with conventional cargo pouch arrangements.

Referring now to FIG. **6**, a non-limiting example is shown of an embodiment of one of the support rails **30**, **40** and of one of the support members **60**, illustrated and described above with respect to FIGS. **1-5**. In the illustrated embodiment, the support rails **30**, **40** (only one support rail shown in FIG. **6**) are provided in the form of hollow, elongated structures having a C-shaped cross-section or variation thereof which includes spaced apart walls or flanges **32**, **34** coupled to or integral with a three-sided body **36** of square or rectangular (or other) cross-section which together define a channel **38** therebetween. In the illustrated embodiment, the support members **60**, **70** are illustratively provided in the form of rollers having raised end walls **62**, **64** separated by a reduced cross-section support portion **66** extending between the end walls **62**, **64**. In some embodiments, the rollers **60**, **70** are rotatable relative to the cargo pouches $\mathbf{50}_1$-$\mathbf{50}_N$ such that the rollers **60**, **70** roll within the channel **38** along the flange **34** of the support rails **30**, **40**, although in alternate embodiments the rollers **60**, **70** may be non-rotatable relative to the cargo pouches $\mathbf{50}_1$-$\mathbf{50}_N$ such that the rollers **60**, **70** glide along the channel **38** of the support rails **30**, **40**. In the illustrated embodiment, the rollers **60**, **70** are attached to opposite ends of a support rod **90** which is fed though an opening formed through or near the tops, e.g., $\mathbf{58}_J$, $\mathbf{58}_{J+1}$, of the cargo pouches $\mathbf{50}_1$-$\mathbf{50}_N$ and which extends

between the sidewalls **20**B of the container **20** as illustrated by example in FIGS. **1** and **6**. In such embodiments, each of the cargo pouches $\mathbf{50}_1$-$\mathbf{50}_N$ is supported on a respective rod **90** passing through an opening formed in the top **58** of the respective pouch $\mathbf{50}_1$-$\mathbf{50}_N$ or otherwise attached to the top **58** of the respective pouch, and rollers **60**, **70** are attached at and to opposite ends of the rod **90**, and the rollers **60**, **70** are inserted into the channels **38** of the respective support rails **30**, **40** to arrange the cargo pouches $\mathbf{50}_1$-$\mathbf{50}_N$ within the container **20** as described above such that the cargo pouches $\mathbf{50}_1$-$\mathbf{50}_N$ are movable along and relative to the support rails **30**, **40**. In some alternate embodiments, the rods **90** may not extend fully across the pouches (e.g., short rods may extend only partially into each side of the pouches), and in other alternate embodiments the rods **90** may be omitted such that the rollers **60**, **70** are attached or otherwise mounted directly to the sides of the pouches $\mathbf{50}_1$-$\mathbf{50}_N$ at or near the tops **58** thereof.

A non-limiting example of another support member **60'**, **70'** configured to glide within the channel **38** of the support rails **30**, **40** is illustrated by example in FIG. **7**. In the embodiment illustrated in FIG. **7**, the support member **60'**, **70'** has a mounting end **62'** configured to be mounted or otherwise attached to a rod, e.g., as illustrated in FIG. **6** and described above, or directly to an end of a pouch $\mathbf{50}_1$-$\mathbf{50}_N$ at or near the top **58** thereof, a flared end **64'** and a pinched section **66'** extending therebetween and having a reduced cross-sectional area relative to the ends **62'**, **64'**.

Referring now to FIG. **8**, a non-limiting example is shown of another embodiment of one of the support rails **30'**, **40'** and of one of the support members **60"**, **70'** illustrated and described above with respect to FIGS. **1**-**5**. In the illustrated embodiment, the support rails **30'**, **40'** (only one support rail shown in FIG. **8**) are provided in the form of elongated brackets defining a channel **38'** therein and extending axially along the bracket. In the embodiment illustrated in FIG. **8**, the support members **60"**, **70"** are illustratively provided in the form of clips **62"** sewn or otherwise attached directly to the sides of the pouches $\mathbf{50}_1$-$\mathbf{50}_N$ at or near the tops, e.g., $\mathbf{58}_J$, $\mathbf{58}_{J+1}$, thereof, wherein each clip **62"** includes a tongue **64"** or similar structure configured to engage the channel **38'** so as to support the cargo pouches $\mathbf{50}_1$-$\mathbf{50}_N$ on the support rails **30'**, **40'** and to also slide or glide along the channel **38'** so as to move the cargo pouches $\mathbf{50}_1$-$\mathbf{50}_N$ along the support rails **30'**, **40'**. In such embodiments, the tongues **64"** of the clips **62"** are thus attached at and to opposite sides of the pouches $\mathbf{50}_1$-$\mathbf{50}_N$ at or near the tops **58** thereof, and the tongues **64"** are inserted into the channels **38'** of the respective support rails **30'**, **40'** to arrange the cargo pouches $\mathbf{50}_1$-$\mathbf{50}_N$ within the container **20** as described above such that the cargo pouches $\mathbf{50}_1$-$\mathbf{50}_N$ are movable along and relative to the support rails **30'**, **40'**.

Referring now to FIG. **9**, a non-limiting example is shown of yet another embodiment of one of the support rails **30"**, **40"** and of one of the support members **60'"**, **70'"** illustrated and described above with respect to FIGS. **1**-**5**. In the illustrated embodiment, the support rails **30"**, **40"** (only one support rail shown in FIG. **9**) are provided in the form of elongated tubes. In the embodiment illustrated in FIG. **9**, the support members **60'"**, **70'"** are illustratively provided in the form rings sewn or otherwise attached directly to the sides of the pouches $\mathbf{50}_1$-$\mathbf{50}_N$ at or near the tops **54**, **58** thereof, wherein each ring **60'"**, **70'"** is configured to be received on and to slide or glide along a respective one of the support rails **30"**, **40"** so as to move the cargo pouches $\mathbf{50}_1$-$\mathbf{50}_N$ along the support rails **30"**, **40"**. In some embodiments, the rings **60'"**, **70'"** may be closed and have any conventional shape, e.g., "O"-shaped, "D"-shaped, etc., although in other embodiments the rings **60'"**, **70'"** may be open at the bottom so as to extend over and onto the respective support rail **30"**, **40"**.

While the disclosure has been illustrated and described in detail in the drawings and foregoing description, such an illustration and description is to be considered as exemplary and not restrictive in character, it being understood that only illustrative embodiments have been shown and described and that all changes and modifications consistent with the disclosure and recited claims are desired to be protected. For example, it will be understood that whereas several different embodiments of the support members (some including support rods) are illustrated in the drawings and described above, such embodiments are provided only by way of example and should not be considered limiting in any way. Myriad other support members (some including other support rods and others not including support rods) known in the art are contemplated by this disclosure and may be used with the concepts described herein. As another example, it will be understood that whereas the embodiment illustrated in FIGS. **1**-**5** is shown and described as including only a single tier of cargo pouches, alternate embodiments are contemplated which may include multiple tiers of cargo pouches, i.e., multiple tiers arranged in a container with a top tier at, adjacent to or spaced apart from, the top of the container, and with each successive tier arranged vertically below the tier above it, wherein the cargo pouches of two or more of the tiers are coupled to each side the container using two support rails, one above the other, as illustrated in the attached drawings and described above.

What is claimed is:

1. A dunnage arrangement, comprising:

a container having spaced-apart sidewalls each defining a length and each extending upwardly from opposite respective sides of a floor of the container,

a first pair of guide rails each mounted to and extending at least partially along the length of a respective one of the spaced-apart sidewalls of the container,

a second pair of guide rails each mounted to and extending at least partially along the length of a respective one of the spaced-apart sidewalls such that each of the second pair of guide rails is positioned between the floor and a respective one of the first pair of guide rails,

a plurality of pouches each having first and second opposed sidewalls extending upwardly from a bottom wall or fold to define a pocket therebetween configured to support cargo within the container, and

support members coupled to or near terminal tops of each of the first and second sidewalls of the plurality of pouches,

wherein the pouches are received side-by-side within the container with the support members coupled to the first sidewalls supported on and movable along the first pair of guide rails and with the support members coupled to the second sidewalls supported on and movable along the second pair of guide rails.

2. The dunnage arrangement of claim **1**, wherein the first pair of guide rails are aligned and parallel with one another with both of the first pair of guide rails disposed a first distance above the floor of the container,

and wherein the second pair of guide rails are aligned and parallel with one another with both of the second pair of guide rails disposed a second distance above the floor of the container, the second distance less than the first distance by at least a thickness of the support members.

3. The dunnage arrangement of claim 2, wherein each of the first pair of guide rails and each of the second pair or guide rails comprises an elongated hollow member defining a channel extending at least partially along the length of a respective one of the spaced-apart sidewalls of the container,

and wherein the support members each comprise at least one rod coupled to or near a terminal top of a respective one of the first and second sidewalls of the plurality of pouches and extending between the spaced-apart sidewalls of the container, and rollers attached to opposite ends of the at least one rod, the rollers disposed within and configured to roll or glide along the channels of a respective one of the first or second pair of guide rails.

4. The dunnage arrangement of claim 2, wherein each of the first pair of guide rails and each of the second pair or guide rails comprises an elongated hollow member defining a channel extending at least partially along the length of a respective one of the spaced-apart sidewalls of the container,

and wherein the support members each comprise a pair of rollers attached to respective opposite sides a respective one of the first and second sidewalls of the plurality of pouches at or near a terminal top thereof, the rollers disposed within and configured to roll or glide along the channels of a respective one of the first or second pair of guide rails.

5. The dunnage arrangement of claim 2, wherein each of the first pair of guide rails and each of the second pair or guide rails comprises an elongated hollow member defining a channel extending at least partially along the length of a respective one of the spaced-apart sidewalls of the container,

and wherein the support members each comprise at least one rod coupled to or near a terminal top of a respective one of the first and second sidewalls of the plurality of pouches and extending between the spaced-apart sidewalls of the container, the at least one rod having flared opposite ends disposed within and configured to glide along the channels of a respective one of the first or second pair of guide rails.

6. The dunnage arrangement of claim 2, wherein each of the first pair of guide rails and each of the second pair or guide rails comprises an elongated bracket defining a channel extending at least partially along the length of a respective one of the spaced-apart sidewalls of the container,

and wherein the support members each comprise a pair of clips attached to respective opposite sides a respective one of the first and second sidewalls of the plurality of pouches at or near a terminal top thereof, each of the clips including an engagement member engaging the channels such that the clips slide or glide along the channels of a respective one of the first or second pair of guide rails.

7. The dunnage arrangement of claim 2, wherein each of the first pair of guide rails and each of the second pair or guide rails comprises an elongated tube extending at least partially along the length of a respective one of the spaced-apart sidewalls of the container,

and wherein the support members each comprise a pair of rings attached to respective opposite sides a respective one of the first and second sidewalls of the plurality of pouches at or near a terminal top thereof, each of the rings received on a respective one of the first or second pair of guide rails such that the rings slide or glide along a respective pair of tubes.

8. The dunnage arrangement of claim 2, wherein the support members comprise:

a plurality of first support members each coupled to or near a terminal top of the first sidewall of a respective one of the plurality of pouches, and

a plurality of second support members each coupled to or near a terminal top of the second sidewall of a respective one of the plurality of pouches.

9. The dunnage arrangement of claim 8, wherein each of the plurality of pouches has a folded configuration in which the first and second sidewalls of the pouch are adjacent to one another, the first support member is supported on the first pair of guide rails and the second support member is supported on the second pair of guide rails and positioned at least partially under the first support member,

and wherein each of the plurality of pouches has an expanded configuration in which the support members of the respective first and second sidewalls are spaced apart from one another along the respective first and second pair of guide rails to allow cargo to be received in and withdrawn from the pocket.

10. A dunnage arrangement, comprising:

a container having spaced-apart sidewalls each defining a length and each extending upwardly from opposite respective sides of a floor of the container,

a first pair of guide rails each mounted to and extending at least partially along the length of a respective one of the spaced-apart sidewalls of the container,

a second pair of guide rails each mounted to and extending at least partially along the length of a respective one of the spaced-apart sidewalls such that each of the second pair of guide rails is positioned between the floor and a respective one of the first pair of guide rails,

a plurality of pouches configured to be received side-by-side within the container, each having first and second opposed sidewalls extending upwardly from a bottom wall or fold to define a pocket therebetween configured to support cargo within the container,

a plurality of first support members each coupled to or near a terminal top of the first sidewall of a respective one of the plurality of pouches, and

a plurality of second support members each coupled to or near a terminal top of the second sidewall of a respective one of the plurality of pouches,

wherein each of the plurality of pouches has a folded configuration in which the first and second sidewalls of the pouch are adjacent to one another, the first support member is supported on the first pair of guide rails and the second support member is supported on the second pair of guide rails and positioned at least partially under the first support member,

and wherein each of the plurality of pouches has an expanded configuration in which the support members of the respective first and second sidewalls are spaced apart from one another along the respective first and second pair of guide rails to allow cargo to be received in and withdrawn from the pocket.

11. The dunnage arrangement of claim 10, wherein the first pair of guide rails are aligned and parallel with one another with both of the first pair of guide rails disposed a first distance above the floor of the container,

and wherein the second pair of guide rails are aligned and parallel with one another with both of the second pair of guide rails disposed a second distance above the floor of the container, the second distance less than the first distance by at least a thickness of the support members.

12. The dunnage arrangement of claim 11, wherein each of the first pair of guide rails and each of the second pair or

guide rails comprises an elongated hollow member defining a channel extending at least partially along the length of a respective one of the spaced-apart sidewalls of the container,

and wherein the plurality of first support members and the plurality of second support members each comprise at least one rod coupled to or near a terminal top of a respective one of the first and second sidewalls of the plurality of pouches and extending between the spaced-apart sidewalls of the container, and rollers attached to opposite ends of the at least one rod, the rollers disposed within and configured to roll or glide along the channels of a respective one of the first or second pair of guide rails.

13. The dunnage arrangement of claim **11**, wherein each of the first pair of guide rails and each of the second pair or guide rails comprises an elongated hollow member defining a channel extending at least partially along the length of a respective one of the spaced-apart sidewalls of the container,

and wherein the plurality of first support members and the plurality of second support members each comprise a pair of rollers attached to respective opposite sides a respective one of the first and second sidewalls of the plurality of pouches at or near a terminal top thereof, the rollers disposed within and configured to roll or glide along the channels of a respective one of the first or second pair of guide rails.

14. The dunnage arrangement of claim **11**, wherein each of the first pair of guide rails and each of the second pair or guide rails comprises an elongated hollow member defining a channel extending at least partially along the length of a respective one of the spaced-apart sidewalls of the container,

and wherein the plurality of first support members and the plurality of second support members each comprise at least one rod coupled to or near a terminal top of a respective one of the first and second sidewalls of the plurality of pouches and extending between the spaced-apart sidewalls of the container, the at least one rod having flared opposite ends disposed within and configured to glide along the channels of a respective one of the first or second pair of guide rails.

15. The dunnage arrangement of claim **11**, wherein each of the first pair of guide rails and each of the second pair or guide rails comprises an elongated bracket defining a channel extending at least partially along the length of a respective one of the spaced-apart sidewalls of the container,

and wherein the plurality of first support members and the plurality of second support members each comprise a pair of clips attached to respective opposite sides a respective one of the first and second sidewalls of the plurality of pouches at or near a terminal top thereof, each of the clips including an engagement member engaging the channels such that the clips slide or glide along the channels of a respective one of the first or second pair of guide rails.

16. The dunnage arrangement of claim **11**, wherein each of the first pair of guide rails and each of the second pair or guide rails comprises an elongated tube extending at least partially along the length of a respective one of the spaced-apart sidewalls of the container,

and wherein the plurality of first support members and the plurality of second support members each comprise a pair of rings attached to respective opposite sides a respective one of the first and second sidewalls of the plurality of pouches at or near a terminal top thereof, each of the rings received on a respective one of the first or second pair of guide rails such that the rings slide or glide along a respective pair of tubes.

17. A dunnage arrangement, comprising:

a container having spaced-apart sidewalls each defining a length and each extending upwardly from opposite respective sides of a floor of the container,

a first pair of guide rails each mounted to and extending at least partially along the length of a respective one of the spaced-apart sidewalls of the container,

a second pair of guide rails each mounted to and extending at least partially along the length of a respective one of the spaced-apart sidewalls such that each of the second pair of guide rails is positioned between the floor and a respective one of the first pair of guide rails,

a plurality of pouches configured to be received side-by-side within the container, each having first and second opposed sidewalls extending upwardly from a bottom wall or fold to define a pocket therebetween for supporting cargo within the container, and

support members, coupled to the plurality of pouches, supported on and movable along each of the first and second pairs of guide rails,

wherein the first sidewall of each of the plurality of pouches defines a first length between the bottom wall or fold and a respective one of the support members coupled thereto and supported on the first pair of guide rails,

and wherein the second sidewall of each of the plurality of pouches defines a second length between the bottom wall or fold and a respective one of the support members coupled thereto and supported on the second pair of guide rails, the second length less than the first length.

18. The dunnage arrangement of claim **17**, wherein both of the first pair of guide rails are aligned and parallel with one another with both of the first pair of guide rails disposed a first distance above the floor of the container,

and wherein both of the second pair of guide rails are aligned and parallel with one another with both of the second pair of guide rails disposed a second distance above the floor of the container, the second distance and the second length less than the first distance and the first length respectively by at least a thickness of the support members.

19. The dunnage arrangement of claim **18**, wherein the support members comprise:

a plurality of first support members each coupled to or near a terminal top of the first sidewall of a respective one of the plurality of pouches, and

a plurality of second support members each coupled to or near a terminal top of the second sidewall of a respective one of the plurality of pouches.

20. The dunnage arrangement of claim **19**, wherein each of the plurality of pouches has a folded configuration in which the first and second sidewalls of the pouch are adjacent to one another, the first support member is supported on the first pair of guide rails and the second support member is supported on the second pair of guide rails and positioned at least partially under the first support member,

and wherein each of the plurality of pouches has an expanded configuration in which the support members of the respective first and second sidewalls are spaced apart from one another along the respective first and second pair of guide rails to allow cargo to be received in and withdrawn from the pocket.

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